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ABSTRACT

Polish folk high schools are modeled after schools developed in the mid-1850s in Denmark to provide general, non-credit education for young adults in rural areas. The main objectives of the folk high schools are to provide a climate for individual student development and to serve as centers where young adults can learn about their cultural heritage. The first Polish folk high school was established in 1900. The folk high school movement developed and prospered along with the growing social consciousness and national awakening which characterized Poland up to World War I. Between the world wars, the folk high school movement was dominated by agricultural expert Ignacy Solarz. Solarz established and directed numerous folk high schools throughout Poland which endeavored to help young peasants become cultural and social forces in their communities. Political and ideological struggles in Poland after World War II resulted in closing most folk high schools. By 1958, however, changes in the ideological climate of East Europe encouraged the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party to reassess its position on cultural and educational matters and made it possible to reestablish the folk high schools. By the 1970s, the folk high schools have again become viable institutions which train young adults from rural areas to become social, vocational, and cultural leaders in their villages. (DB)

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THE POLISH FOLK HIGH SCHOOLS

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ABOUT THIS SERIES AND THIS PAPER

This Occasional Paper is the seventeenth in a series being published by the Centre for Continuing Education. Our aim is to contribute to the field of adult education by publishing papers which originate here at The University of British Columbia and are deemed to be worthy of reaching a wider audience than would otherwise be the case.

This paper is a joint venture between Jindra Kulich of The University of British Columbia and Agnieszka Bron-Wojciechowska of the University of Warsaw.

Jindra Kulich is Director of the Centre for Continuing Education at UBC. He is interested in and has published many articles on adult education in Europe, particularly Eastern Europe. Three of his papers, on training of adult educators in East Germany, Poland and Hungary were published in this series. He has lived in Denmark and studied the folk high schools there and in the other Scandinavian countries.

Agnieszka Bron-Wojciechowska is on the faculty of the Adult Education Department in the Pedagogical Institute of the University of Warsaw. She has an intimate knowledge of the Polish folk high schools and has also visited Denmark and Sweden to study the folk high schools there. Among her publications on the folk high schools are a comparative study of motivation of students in Denmark and Poland and a recent volume on folk high schools in Poland and abroad (Uniwersytety ludowe w Polsce i za granicą).

THE POLISH FOLK HIGH SCHOOLS

The Genesis of the Folk High School

Denmark

Both the concept and the prototype of the folk high school--a general education, non-credit, residential institution for young adults--originated in the mid-1850's in Denmark.

The folk high schools are based on the ideas of N.F.S. Grundtvig, Danish churchman, poet and philosopher. Grundtvig's folk high school idea was the result of several influences, among these his knowledge of the colleges of Cambridge and Oxford, his experience of the contemporary Latin schools, the excesses of the French Revolution, and the romanticism of his time.

The new school Grundtvig envisaged was to enable the common people to take on the responsibility which the new democratic governments were to lay on their shoulders. Unlike the stagnated Latin schools of his time and personal experience, the school he proposed was to be a centre of liberal education, a 'school for life', which would awaken and foster a desire and ability to live a full life. This meant to Grundtvig a school with full daily involvement of both the students and the teachers in a fellowship and a true community. In addition to this spirit of community which was to provide a climate condusive to individual development of the students, the 'living word' was to awaken them.

The 'living word' is one of the central concepts in Grundtvig's idea of the folk high school. The bookish, academic knowledge of the Latin schools was to him the 'dead word'. "Living presupposes an element of inspiration. Something of the flame of the prophet and the bard must fire the tongue of him who would kindle youth to action. The 'living word' has its source in idealism, in a deep belief in nation and humanity. It cannot draw its power from books alone."[1]

The school was to be closely related to the language of the common people and to their way of life. It should foster and develop further a culture in which all people share, a folkelig culture. This is the second central

concept. The Danish concept of folkelig defies all attempts at equivalent one word translation. It encompasses both the folk tradition developed through the centuries and a feeling of being part of this tradition. It is not a manifestation of narrow-minded nationalism but rather a full realization of the Danish cultural heritage as part of the old Norse heritage and also part of the cultural heritage of mankind.

It is not an accident that Grundtvig's idea of the folk high school was first put into practice in South Jutland, at Rödding, when a school was established in 1844 to combat the influence of the German-speaking upper class. The next two schools, opened at Uldum in 1848 and at Ryslinge in 1851, also were closely connected with the peasant class, a connection which the Danish folk high schools kept for a century.

The folk high school at Ryslinge was established by Kristen Kold and provided the most important model emulated by the Danish folk high schools for many years. Kristen Kold became equally celebrated as the implementor of the folk high school, as Grundtvig was as the father of the idea.

Within a short time the folk high school idea spread to Norway where a similar struggle for the maintenance of its native culture was going on. The first Norwegian folk high school was established in 1864 at Sagatun, followed by a school at Vonheim established in 1877. Sweden's first three folk high schools were established in 1868 at Herrestad, Önnestad and Hvilan. In Finland, a Finnish-language folk high school was established in 1889 at Kangasala, while a Swedish-language school opened at Borgaa in the same year.

With the folk high school as conceived by Grundtvig and realized by Kold well established in Denmark (by the turn of the century there were 74 folk high schools in operation), and its variants having taken root in Finland, Norway and Sweden, the stage was set for further expansion in Scandinavia and abroad.

In the early years of this century there was considerable interest raised abroad in the so obviously successful institution which has greatly contributed to the transformation, within two generations, of a largely backward peasantry into a progressive farming middle class.[2] Attempts were made in Europe and North America to transplant the idea, and sometimes the

prototype institution. Such attempts met with varying degree of success. The successful ventures involved modifying the folk high school idea to meet local needs and conditions, while all attempts to transplant the prototype as such failed. Most of these ventures are reasonably well described and analysed in the literature. However, only very little is known of the successful story of the folk high schools in Poland.

Poland

The application of the Danish folk high school idea and prototype in Poland is of interest as it is one of the very few countries outside of Scandinavia where the folk high schools were successfully established.

The situation in Poland at the turn of the century (partitioned between and governed by Austria, Prussia and Russia) was similar to that of Finland, and also to that of Denmark fifty years earlier. The setting was a primarily agricultural economy and a foreign cultural influence and, in the case of Poland and Finland, oppression. The Danish and Swedish folk high schools got to be known in Poland in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and the first Polish folk high school, inspired by the Danish idea and prototype, was established in 1900.

Polish Folk High Schools Before 1918[3]

In the period from 1900 to the First World War there was a growing social consciousness and national awakening in Poland, especially in the Russian part. The Polish cultural, educational and social activities had to be undertaken mostly illegally and at considerable risk to those involved. In 1901, 65 per cent of the population in the Russian part of Poland and 56 per cent in the Austrian part were illiterate, while illiteracy was minimal in the Prussian part where the schools were Germanized.[4] The climate for the transplantation of the folk high school idea was favourable.

As early as 1891 Zofia Kowalewska wrote about the folk high schools in Sweden and in 1902 Stanislaw Michalski wrote about the Danish folk high schools. However, due to the cultural and political oppression in Poland, where Germanization or Russification of the native population was the goal, these and other authors could not call the folk high schools (in Polish the term

universities was and is used rather than high schools) by their proper name but had to use the subterfuge of calling them peasant rather than folk universities.

The first Polish folk high school was established in 1900 at Pszczelin near Warsaw. Jadwiga Dziubińska who visited Denmark and the folk high schools became its principal. The second school was established at Kruszynek in 1904. Both had to be called agricultural courses as the Czarist government would not allow them as schools.

Between 1900 and 1914 seven such schools, later on referred to as peasants' universities, were in operation in the Russian part of Poland. With the exception of the Peasants' University at Warsaw which was organized by the University for All as a legal sponsor, they were registered with the Ministry of Agriculture in Petersburg as agricultural vocational courses without the right to offer any general education. In reality, however, these clandestine folk high schools did illegally teach the Polish language, literature and history, as well as general education subjects such as geography, hygiene, social sciences and ethics.

Some of the folk high schools were open to young men while some accepted only young women. There were no alternating sessions for men and women as was the practice in Denmark and no coeducational schools. The participants took a considerable risk in attending the schools. After they returned back to the villages they were very active in the national and social awakening process and in the cultural and educational life of the peasant population, and often were subjected to persecution by the Czarist government.

It is of interest that all the pre-First World War folk high schools in Poland were established only in the Russian part of Poland. It seems that, as in Russian governed Finland at that time, the soil was ripe for such an educational institution to take root. Wojciechowski points out that in the Prussian part of Poland there already were established agricultural vocational schools which were attended also by Poles, and that the Prussian government would not allow the establishment of separate Polish schools. Furthermore, he claims that in the Prussian and Austrian parts there were not the same social forces at work to foster national awakening as were present in the Russian part.[5]

The seven original Polish folk high schools, through the work of the young peasant men and women who attended them, contributed significantly to the national awakening of the Polish rural population in the Russian part of Poland. The First World War destroyed them and created the first ten-year break in the continuity of these schools in Poland.

The Polish Folk High Schools Between the World Wars

The hiatus of the folk high school idea ended first in 1920 when Helena Radlińska, a leader in Polish adult education, proposed to establish a folk high school of the Danish prototype at Góra Putawska. The first post-war folk high school was established in 1921 in Dalki by The Folk Reading Rooms Association, with the Catholic priest Antoni Ludwiczak as principal. Ludwiczak opened another folk high school at Zagórze in 1926. He visited Denmark and was aware of Grundvig's idea and knew the Danish folk high schools.[6] Another folk high school, conceived by E. Nowicky, was established by the Department of Post-school Education of the Elementary School Teacher Association in 1924. Also in 1924 Ignacy Solarz was called to head the Rural People's University at Szyce, which applied the best ideas of the Danish folk high schools to the needs of Polish peasantry and which was to be the model for the Polish folk high schools. Interestingly, the school was established in the same year as the publication of E. Nowicky's translation of the influential German work on the Danish folk high schools by A.H. Hollmann, Uniwersytet ludowy i duchowe podstawy demokracji.[7]

Ignacy Solarz and the Polish Folk High Schools

What Nicolai Grundtvig and Kristen Kold were to the Danish folk high schools, Ignacy Solarz was to the Polish ones; he combined in one person the conceptualizer and the realizer.

Solarz was born in 1891, the son of a farmer. After secondary school graduation he studied agriculture and obtained a degree in agricultural engineering. After graduation he became an instructor-leader of the farmers' agricultural circles which were organized in many villages for both vocational and general upgrading of the peasants.

Solarz got to be a good organizer and an inspiring leader, and in 1922 he was sent for six months to Denmark to study agriculture. This provided him with first hand experience of the progressive Danish farming methods and of the cooperatives, and also gave him an opportunity to get acquainted with the work of the folk high schools.

At about the same time the Elementary School Teachers Association, at the urging of E. Nowicky, was contemplating transplanting Grundtvig's folk high school idea to Poland and asked Solarz to head the school. The folk high school, in Polish uniwersytet ludowy, was established in 1924 at Szyce, with a winter course for young men and a summer course for young women from the villages.

From the outset, Solarz acknowledged that the aims of Grundtvig's and his own folk high school concept were the same; like Grundtvig and Kold, Solarz saw the folk high school as a school for life, not for living. He accepted the residential community and the 'living word' as the didactical foundations of the school. To Solarz, like to Grundtvig, the living word was "the most effective means of awakening thought, creating a point of view, forming ideas and emotions and building a personality."[8] The general education program of the school was similar to the awakening program of the Danish folk high schools.

The folk high school at Szyce, under the leadership of Solarz and with the assistance of his wife Zofia and other teachers, for seven years inspired young peasants to unfold their individuality and to become a cultural and social force in their home communities. This progressive school seems to have been more than the sponsor of the school (the Polish Elementary School Teachers Association) wished for and Solarz and the leadership of the association came to differences of opinion, both pedagogical and ideological. In 1931, on a pretext of financial difficulties, the Polish Teachers Association (formed from a merger of the associations of the elementary and secondary school teachers in 1930) dismissed Solarz and closed down the school (only to reopen it again in the same year under new leadership).

As the Danish folk high schools after 1864 turned a loss into a gain, so did Solarz in 1932 when he opened a new folk high school, the Wiejski Uniwersytet Orkanowy, at Gać Przeworska, and unfettered, imbued it with his own ideas. The folk high school was supported by the Cooperative Society of Rural Universities but in its work it was entirely Solarz's creation. The

school was also closely aligned with the Association of Rural Youth "Wici."

The ideological basis of the folk high school at Gać formed the spiritual culture of the people, the cultural traditions of the peasantry, and progressive popular movements. Although a member of the Polish Peasant Party since its establishment in 1931, Solarz did not believe at this stage in the need for political power struggle and the efficacy of the political parties, which he saw as a passing phenomenon and as interested only in using people for the party's aims. He saw the future need not in political struggle but rather in the moral renaissance of the nation which would lead to political and social change. Peasantry was to play an important role in this rebirth.[9] "We want not only political structure and even more not only an economic order, but also and foremost the courage and the ability of the masses to create their own culture."[10]

Later on in the 1930's, in the reality of the sanacja regime, Solarz gradually changed his views in the direction of taking direct political action and towards elimination of existing barriers between the peasants, the workers and the intelligentsia.[11]

The characteristics of the program of the Solarz folk high school at Gać were (1) hystoricismus, through which everything was seen and explained as growing out of historical roots, (2) 'ludowość', which saw the importance and the role of simple people in the development of mankind and in the life of any society, and (3) actuality, which ensured that all learning based on historical roots and whetted by 'ludowość', had to bear on the contemporary social situation and future development.[12]

The 'living word' to Solarz was not only the awakening lecture, prevalent at the Danish folk high schools of the period between the two world wars and criticized by him as one-sided. Solarz understood under the 'living word' not only the development of the mind but also means of artistic and emotional expression. He also placed didactical value on and used in his school extensive discussion, as well as independent reports by the participants (based on observation and experience rather than on theoretical study).[13]

In contrast to Grundtvig, Solarz wanted his students to be more independent in their thinking as he believed that this prepared them for the social and cultural emancipation of the peasantry.[14] His lectures on history

and literature were factors in forming social consciousness of the rural youth. Unlike the Danish folk high schools, Solarz also provided lectures on the natural sciences as he believed that the study of natural sciences would induce a scientific outlook on life and also would foster desirable ethical values.[15]

The residential aspect, the living community of Grundtvig's idea translated by Kold into family life style of the Danish folk high schools, was transformed by Solarz in the direction of agrarianism through adopting the peasant family life style as one of the basic elements of his folk high school preparing rural youth for their role in the villages which he considered as important social centres.

Thus drawing on the Danish folk high school idea and prototype, Solarz applied them creatively to the Polish reality and needs of his time and imbued them with educational, social and cultural principles growing out of the specific needs of the Polish peasantry. To this work he committed his life until his untimely death at the hands of the Nazi occupants in 1940.

Fifteen Years of Development and Growth

Following the pattern of successful adoption of the Danish folk high school abroad, the Polish folk high schools grew after the establishment of the first inter-war high school at Szyce in 1924. By 1934 there were five folk high schools established and by 1938, 23 such schools were in operation in Poland, the largest number outside of the Scandinavian countries at that time.

The Polish folk high schools of the period between the two world wars were strongly influenced by Ignacy Solarz and his writing and model of a folk high school. The schools offered generally a five-month course for men in the winter and a four-month course for women in the summer. There were no coeducational schools in Poland during that period. The program of the schools was based on general education and the participants came almost exclusively from the peasantry. Throughout the 15 years and beyond, into the trying war and post-war years, former participants played an important role out of proportion to their numbers in the cultural, social, economic and political life of the peasantry and indeed the nation. The Polish folk high schools were destroyed, for the second time, by the outbreak of the Second World War and by German and Russian invasion of Poland in 1939.

Post-war Rebirth of the Folk High Schools

Although the war and the occupation took its heavy toll among the former staff and participants of the Polish folk high schools, those who survived immediately set out in 1945 to rebuild and expand the schools. During 1945-1946, 40 folk high schools were established under the aegis of the Association of People's Universities. By 1948 there were 67 such schools in Poland, by then organized under the Peasant Self-help Society.

The courses offered were five to seven months long and some of the schools were coeducational. The participants still came almost exclusively from the villages and the program of the schools was aimed at serving the needs of peasantry.

The heritage left by Ignacy Solarz and the schools of the inter-war period exercised a strong influence on the didactics and program of the post-war schools. However, there was a new social and political climate in Poland and there was by no means unity of view on the role of the folk high schools. The eight years following the war were filled with considerable searching, discussion and polemics among the proponents of the schools. Some tried to harken back to the old philosophy and work style of the schools in the inter-war period, while others tried to take into account the changed social, economic and political climate of Poland and to meet the contemporary needs of the village population. Most of the folk high schools tried to remain neutral in the political-ideological struggle which was going on in Poland in the period from 1944 to 1949--but in the post-war situation it was impossible to remain neutral. As a result, by 1953, all but three of the 67 folk high schools were closed down.

The liquidation of the Polish folk high schools during the period of the 'cult of the personality' which settled on East Europe for most of the 1950's, was not taken lightly by the peasantry. Through their organizations, and especially through former participants, the village population was insistently pointing out the role the folk high schools had played and the role they could and should play in post-war Poland.

In the changes in the ideological climate of East Europe which started in Poland in 1956, the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party

reassessed its position on cultural-educational work and made it possible to re-establish the folk high schools. However, it took until 1958 before the first new school was opened and joined the three schools which survived through the fifties.

Second Post-war Rebirth and Metamorphosis

In this latest period of the several times interrupted development of the Polish folk high schools, the schools were put under the direction of the Association of Rural Youth (since 1976 the Association of Polish Socialist Youth--formed out of a merger of several youth organizations including the Association of Rural Youth). The Association set up a People's Universities Council which was to assist with the direction as well as the preparation of plans, programs, and didactical methods for the folk high schools. The Council hasapproximately 30 members, all of whom are or were teachers in the folk high schools; nine of the Council members are the folk high school principals. The number of the schools slowly grew and since the late 1960's fluctuated between eight and ten. Each of the schools has approximately 50 participants and three to four teachers. They recruit the participants from the districts surrounding the location of the school.

The Metamorphosis

The significant drop in the number of the folk high schools from 67 in 1948 to nine in the 1970's underscores the significant change in their role. From schools of general humanistic education for young adults in the villages who tended to become leaders in their community as a result of their awakening as individuals, the schools became a training institution aiming consciously to prepare village social and cultural leaders in general.

In 1958, Józef Tejchma, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Association of Rural Youth outlined the role of the folk high schools as follows:

> The aim of the folk high school should be, first of all, developing--that is educating and building personality--individuals who will perform roles of organizers of different kinds of social life, individuals who will be ambitious and capable reformers in the villages.[16]

Almost 20 years later Agnieszka Bron-Wojciechowska described the actual role and activities of the schools as carried out in the mid-seventies as follows:

> The main task of the Polish [folk high] schools is the professional training of young people for an active leadership role in cultural and social life in the countryside through employment with cultural community centres and social and recreational clubs. This means that the schools maintain a balance between theory and practice. Young people receive instruction in organization, methods, preparation and implementation of programs, and in recognizing and responding to the cultural needs of country people. They also learn about contemporary life and culture, and how to continue to learn and improve their own knowledge. These goals are realized by programs which vary according to the level and intent of a given folk high school.[17]

The success of the folk high schools can be seen in the results of a survey conducted in 1965 which showed that out of 262 participants in that year, only five per cent did not intend to return to the village. Out of 115 former participants, included in the survey, 92 were back in the villages, with 36 of them engaged in cultural-educational work or agricultural support services.[18]

Since the mid-1960's, the general ideological-political training of the young adults in the villages gave way to a program of vocational training for the cultural-educational workers in the village institutions, especially the village club managers. The reason for this latest change in the aim and program of the folk high schools was the new vigorous initiative in Poland in 1963 to establish village clubs throughout the country, replacing the traditional <u>świetlice</u>. Within three years some 13,000 of the new village clubs were in operation, changing significantly the organization and methodology of cultural-educational work in the villages. The rapid growth of the new institution placed a considerable stress on the need for managers and the folk high schools, already in the business of preparing village leadership in general, were seen as logical institutions to meet the need.

The courses offered by the folk high schools now run from one to ten months, depending on the level of the course. The basic course program includes usually (1) introduction to the social and political life in the

village; history of Poland and Poland's role in world history; revolutionary traditions of Polish workers' and people's movements; (2) overview of forms and methods of education; psychic and psychological development; philosophy and religion; socialist ethics; and (3) introduction to cultural-educational work in the village clubs; and theoretical and practical preparation for various forms of cultural-educational work.[19] By 1970, 7,030 cultural-educational workers graduated from the basic course.[20] A one-month version of the basic course is offered by the folk high school at Wierzchosławicie to upgrade managers of the village clubs, who did not have a pre-service training, and committee members.

After the basic course the workers in the field can come back for short courses which equip them with further specific qualifications such as operation of projectors and other A-V equipment, child care, business management, driving and nutrition. By 1970, 10,619 participants attended such supplementary short courses.[21] The folk high schools now also serve as a place for conferences of mass organizations; such conferences attracted thousands of participants over the years.

> During the 1973-1974 school year, 2,221 persons took part in courses and a further 4,683 participated in seminars, conferences and short seminar courses. In the 1974-1975 school year, 86% of participants were from the countryside. Most are women (86%). The majority (63%) are from 20 to 30 years old; 19% are between 18 and 19, and 28% are over 51 years of age. Over half (53%) have completed primary school (eight grades); 32% have some secondary/vocational school education; 14.5% have completed secondary and general/technical education. Only .05% had higher education. The predominance of women is similar to experiences in other countries. In Poland it is probably due to the fact that the vocational training offered by the folk high schools is connected with professions and occupations traditionally practiced by women--organizing and managing social clubs and community centres.[22]

The majority of the participants in the basic courses are in their late teens and early twenties, and do not have any vocational preparation in agriculture or introduction to cultural-educational work. Most of the participants do return to the villages where they find employment in cultural-educational institutions or in agricultural support services. Some

move on to further vocational training in agriculture, while a few carry on to further academic education. On their return to the villages, most of the graduates of the folk high schools contribute to the cultural, educational, social and political life of their community through appropriate institutions and organizations.[23]

The teachers for the folk high schools are drawn from among proven and ideologically committed pedagogues and other social workers; they come from other cultural-educational institutions, the members of the Association of Rural Youth (now the Association of Polish Socialist Youth), and others. Each folk high school has at least four full-time teachers; there are some 86 teachers at the nine schools; 31 are full-time and three are part-time resident teachers, while the rest are visiting lecturers.[24] Most of the resident teachers have at least some higher education; those without degrees are usually upgrading themselves through correspondence courses, while those with a degree are engaged in post-graduate work. Among the visiting lecturers are university faculty and research workers.

Diversification and Outreach

Among the most recent developments is the institution of a training course offering qualification at the advanced level, open to candidates with completed secondary education. This new course is offered by the folk high schools at Radawnica, Wierzchosławicie and Wzdów. The folk high school at Rudziska specializes since the early 1970's in the training of organizers of tourism among rural population. Young women are prepared in eight-month courses for work in the Modern Housewife Centres at the folk high school at Większyce; some 40 of the 50-60 students in each course come from rural areas.

The outreach work of the folk high school started in 1975 when the school at Gardzienice began to experiment with a combination of residential and extra-mural and guided independent study program for workers in village clubs. Several of the folk high schools now offer a one-year program of training of village club managers, which consists of three residential sessions of 21 days and guided independent study.[25]

Through the metamorphosis of the folk high schools since the 1960's and subsequent development, the contemporary Polish folk high schools bear only a faint resemblance to the folk high schools of the inter-war period.

The Folk High School Idea and the Polish Folk High Schools

The folk high school idea originated in Denmark as a response to the social and educational needs of the country's primarily peasant population. It was based on a creative combination of the perception of this need with an inspiration gained by Grundtvig from the residential colleges in England, modified and applied to the Danish situation, and from the romantic philosophy of his time. Similarly, Solarz, almost a hundred years later, combined creatively his inspiration from a visit to Denmark and the Danish folk high schools and his perception of the social and educational needs of the Polish peasantry of his time, into a Polish version of the folk high school.

Wroczyński, in differentiating between the Danish and Polish schools points out quite correctly that the Danish folk high schools arose in response to the threat of Germanizing influence and loss of territory and that their aim was to awaken the social and cultural life of the rural population and thus of the nation. He goes on to state that in Poland after independence was gained in 1918 it was not a question of struggle for the nation, but rather "restructuring of the social and economic order and formation of new, global and democratic, culture."[26] However, he forgot that the first Polish folk high schools, in the Russian part of the partitioned Poland around the turn of the century, grew out of the same need for cultural and social survival as did the Danish folk high schools half a century earlier. Between the two world wars, some of the Polish folk high schools, particularly those directed by Ignacy Solarz, aimed at educating the young peasants by changing their attitudes, awakening their civic and national consciousness, and preparing them for social and cultural change. These schools were committed to a progressive political ideology, while the other folk high schools in Poland cooperated with the right wing government or educated the youth in a conservative way.

The many similarities between the Polish folk high schools and the Danish prototype were mentioned earlier. However, there are many significant differences which ought to be outlined.

From the beginning, the Danish folk high schools had the full support of the peasant population. Very soon after the first schools were established they enjoyed also unbroken significant financial support from the state, with

very little interference with the operation of the schools. (Denmark is the only country where this support without control has been maintained up to this time.) The Polish folk high schools had to work partly illegally during the period 1900-1914, had little support, and in the 1930's actual harassment on the part of the government during the inter-war period, and are under state and Association of Socialistic Polish Youth control now.

The Polish schools, from the beginning in 1900 to date, have served exclusively rural peasant population; this was and still is their main strength enabling them to maintain their influence in the life of the villages. The Danish folk high schools on the other hand, have radically changed the composition of their participants towards a mixture of rural and city young adults and lost the significant position they had in the life of the nation. Like the earlier Danish folk high schools, through the participants who returned to the villages and played an important role in the social, cultural, political and economic development of the country, the Polish folk high schools played and still play a significant role in the life of the nation.

An important difference among the Danish and Polish folk high schools are the conscious efforts in the Polish schools not to motivate the young participants to turn away from the village and seek 'better' life in the cities, but rather to equip them to return to the village as effective cultural, social and political leaders.[27] Similarly while both the Danish and the early Polish folk high schools did set out to awaken the individual to his best potential and thus only indirectly create leaders in the villages, the role of the Polish folk high schools since 1957 was consciously defined in the direction of preparing village leaders, and from the sixties on training professional cultural-educational workers.

A comparative study of motivation of Polish and Danish students attending folk high schools brought out that the Polish participants are primarily motivated by a desire to acquire practical, vocational skills, while the Danish participants give a higher rating to general education and more intellectual pursuits--this is, of course, not surprising, given the differences in aims and in curriculum between the Polish and the Danish folk high schools.[28]

The close connection (from the early times on) of the Polish folk high schools with the daily social, cultural, and later on also with the economic

and political life of the surrounding countryside is another significant difference from the Danish situation (where the folk high schools on the whole remained aloof from the villages and towns where they are located).

Any institution, if it is to remain vital to the society of which it is a part, must change with the changing needs of that society and of individuals forming that society. Both the Danish and the Polish folk high schools have changed, due to different conditions and for different reasons. In both countries, the original long-term courses were supplemented by short-term courses, and most recently by the use of the folk high schools for seminars and conferences. The purely general, humanistic program, gave way in many Danish folk high schools to specialization and even to pre-vocational courses, while the Polish folk high schools became primarily residential vocational schools. (The Swedish folk high schools, with their up to three-year course, turned into an alternate secondary school, with prescribed curriculum and examinations, a fate which the Danish folk high schools have thus far managed to avoid.)

The most recent development in some of the Polish folk high schools, with a combination of residential short courses and guided independent study raises the question of how much can a folk high school change and still remain a folk high school. If the 'living word' and the residential community are accepted as the two basic didactic elements and the touchstones of the folk high school, then a question can be raised whether the most recent development of the Polish folk high schools will not change them into very effective vocational schools for village cultural-educational workers but no longer folk high schools.

FOOTNOTES

[1]As quoted in J.C. Möller, Education in Democracy, London, Faber & Faber Ltd., 1944, p. 25.

[2]For an excellent account of this striking social change see H. Begtrup, H. Lund and P. Manniche, The Folk High Schools of Denmark and the Development of a Farming Community, Copenhagen, Nyt Nordisk Forlag, 1949, (4th ed.).

[3]This section is based primarily on information provided by Kazimierz Wojciechowski, "75 lat uniwersytetów ludowych w Polsce", Oświata Dorosłych, vol. 19, No. 3, (1975), pp. 146-155 and "Początki i rozwoj uniwersytetów ludowych w Polsce do 1945 roku", pp. 9-28 in Uniwersytety ludowe w Polsce i za granicą, Agnieszka Bron-Wojciechowska (ed.), Warsaw, Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1977.

[4]Wojciechowski, 1975, op. cit., p. 148.

[5]Wojciechowski, 1977, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

[6]Ibid., p. 28.

[7]A.H. Hollman, Uniwersytet ludowy i duchowe podstawy demokracji, Warsaw, Biblioteka "Oświaty Pozaszkolnej", 1924, 119 pp.

[8]Ignacy Solarz, Wiejskie uniwersytety ludowe w Polsce, Warsaw, Towarzystwo Regionalnych Ośrodków Społeczno-Wychowawczych dla Młodzieży Wiejskiej, 1938, p. 127.

[9]Andrzej Kojder, "Ignacego Solarza utopia realizowana" Wies Współczesna, No. 8, (August, 1970), pp. 111-112.

[10]F. Popławski and S. Dyksiński (eds.), Ignacy Solarz i jego uniwersytet ludowy 1924-1939, Warsaw, Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1965, p. 268.

[11]Kojder, op. cit., pp. 114-115.

[12]S. Mauersberg, Z dziejów oświaty dorosłych, Warsaw, TWP, 1977, pp. 87-88.

[13]L. Turos, Uniwersytet ludowy Ignacego Solarza i jego wychowankowie, Warsaw, Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1970, p. 279.

[14]Ibid., p. 71.

[15]Ibid., pp. 58-59.

[16]As quoted in W. Winkiel, "Rola i miejsce uniwersytetów ludowych w systemie oświaty i wychowania", Oświata Dorosłych, vol. 19, No. 3, (1975), pp. 129-130.

[17]A. Bron-Wojciechowska, "Folk High Schools in Poland", Convergence, vol. 10, No. 3, (1977), p. 49.

[18]W. Winkiel, "Uniwersytety ludowe ZMW -- Czym są i czym być powinny", Oświata Dorosłych, vol. 14, No. 2, (1970), p. 67.

[19]B. Szarleja, "Kierunki pracy uniwersytetów ludowych", Oświata Dorosłych, vol. 14, No. 2, (1970), p. 73.

[20]W. Winkiel, 1970, op. cit., p. 65.

[21]Loc. cit.

[22]A. Bron-Wojciechowska, "Folk High Schools in Poland", op. cit., p. 51.

[23]Szarleja, op. cit., pp. 74-75.

[24]Information on teachers in the folk high schools based on A. Bron-Wojciechowska, "Folk High Schools in Poland", p. 52.

[25]M. Lasa, "Kierunki pracy UL w bieżącym roku szkolnym", Oświata Dorosłych, vol. 19, No. 3, (1975), p. 178.

[26]R. Wroczyński, "Ignacego Solarza koncepcja uniwersytetu ludowego i jej źródła", Przeglad Historiczno-Oświatowy, vol. 4, (1962), p. 647.

[27]See A. Bron-Wojciechowska, "Folk High Schools in Poland", op. cit., p. 50; Szarleja, op. cit., p. 74; and Winkiel, 1970, op. cit., p. 70.

[28]A. Bron-Wojciechowska, Uniwersytety ludowe w Polsce i za granicą, op. cit., pp. 116-131.